CHAPTER 15

Narcissism as Evil

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The essence of evil is narcissism. We further propose that the essence of narcissism is a lack of self, and that the lack of self is due to a lack of proper early life attachment. In this chapter, we will focus predominantly on psychological and behavioral symptoms of narcissism and the psychological and behavioral symptoms of inadequate attachment, and propose a means for a restoration of self and reduction of narcissism in individuals, relationships, and society at large. In refraining from a concrete definition of evil, we propose that evil surfaces out of the phenomenon of narcissism as a detriment to personal growth and, consequently, relational growth. This lack of growth is, then, a reflection of a lack of goodness, or an inclination toward evil.

The term *narcissism* was coined in the field of psychology as an outgrowth of the Greek mythological figure Narcissus, who was transfixed by his reflection in a pool of water, and as a result failed to move beyond this fascination. As a result of this origin of the term *narcissism,* the term has come to mean undue self-focus and has become a central concept in the field of psychology. Simply understood, narcissism is selfishness. Narcissistic people are particularly self-oriented and self-inflating. They spend an inordinate amount of time thinking about themselves, as well as a fair bit of time concerned about what other people might think of them. Interestingly, narcissistic people can be quite attractive due to an ability to impress people with an ingratiating nature, or they can be quite the opposite, namely, challenging, angry, and generally quite difficult to live with because of their tendency to express absolute demands. These two extremes of social engagement reflect the two sides that actually exist in narcissism: undue self-absorption and undue awareness of

others. Their awareness of others, however, is actually a concern for others' rejection of them, rather than concern for others.

The popular understanding of narcissism is that it roughly equates to selfishness. At a deeper level, however, narcissism is selflessness. In other words, when an individual is acting in a "narcissistic" manner or may have a narcissistic personality disorder, this individual acts selfish but, in fact, does not have a good sense of self. It is essential to have this sense of self for adequate emotional and interpersonal functioning. We propose in this chapter that narcissism needs to be distinguished from evil, but that narcissism can lead to, cause, or aggravate evil or evils. We will discuss the possibilities that narcissism is evil, that narcissistic behavior is evil, and that narcissistic individuals are evil.

Narcissism is a central figure in understanding humankind. In childhood, particularly in early childhood, it is natural and necessary for the child to be self-oriented and "narcissistic" (if we use that term). There are some natural elements of what we might call *positive narcissism* in adolescence, but in adulthood narcissism is largely pathological, harmful to oneself and to others. We shall begin our study of narcissism with an examination of natural childlike narcissism.

NATURAL AND HEALTHY NARCISSISM

Narcissism can be thought of as a predominately self-oriented means of engaging life. Due to the nature of childhood and the requirement that a child develop both a sense of self and a sense of other people, it is natural and necessary that children be predominantly self-focused, or narcissistic. This means that children of this young age see the world as serving them, and do not particularly worry about serving the world. Furthermore, this self-oriented view of life is extremely important for a child to have so that she may develop a solid sense of self from which she can eventually engage the world. The delicate task of transitioning from childhood through adolescence into the adult world may be thought of as a transition from a self-oriented perspective to an other-oriented perspective of life. This is no easy transition to make, and it is possible only if a child is given sufficient time and experience to be naturally narcissistic.

Consider what it must be like for an infant, especially a newborn, to enter into life and (ideally) be completely cared for by the external world. Although we cannot attribute too much cognition to an infant, this infant believes that her needs are not only central but also, in fact, the only needs of the world. If she is hungry or in any discomfort, she naturally cries, and this cry generally leads to a mother-figure meeting her wants and needs. In fact, at this time of life the infant does not distinguish between her wants and needs. For the most part, her wants are, in fact, needs. She needs to be fed when hungry,

cared for when she is in some kind of discomfort, and comforted when she is distressed. And she needs to be nurtured with physical presence a sufficient amount of time in order to feel secure in life. Importantly, these needs are not perfectly met, nor are they met within the time span (immediately) that the infant wants them to be met. The not meeting of human needs could be considered to be the human condition, that is, we all experience attachment difficulties to some degree. When the above-mentioned imperfect meeting of needs is severe, regardless of the intention of the caregiver, the resulting adult narcissistic condition is primed.

A second important understanding of infancy is that the infant does not distinguish between her caregiver and herself. In fact, she does not distinguish herself from much of her environment as least for the first months of life. This lack of distinction leads to what we, as psychologists, consider to be an "unconscious" acceptance of total dependency on the external world as natural. The infant generally does not want to be separated from the caregiver or from the world at large. Psychologists identify this early time of connection as symbiotic; in other words, the infant feels a primary symbiosis with the mother figure and a secondary symbiosis with the world around her. There is no separation; there is no self apart from others; and there is no "other." The infant, of course, has come from a uterine environment where she was, in fact, unified with her mother physically and symbolically unified with the world. This unification is essential in order for other-orientation to evolve. Any disturbance in this natural symbiosis universally causes profound distortion of self, distortion of the world, and distortion of the self in relation to the world.

The term *narcissism* in reference to infancy and early childhood is used as a positive characteristic because it denotes proper attachment. It is healthy because the child should be self-focused for survival. Survival can occur only if there is proper attachment both physically and emotionally as one with the mother figure. This attachment is foundational for self-development, which then leads to relational development. Attachment to the mother figure gives the infant a sense of safety and completeness. When her needs are met, the infant feels safe and complete. The infant must be complete with her maternal figure before she can become complete with herself in order to eventually become complete with the world. Any inadequacy in this early symbiosis between infant and mother figure causes profound damage in an individual's sense of safety, which ultimately leads to further damage in life, particularly in relationships. In contrast, if attachment is appropriate, then by the age of 6 the child is safely prepared for and desirous of separation leading to self-identity and interpersonal activity.

The ages of approximately 6 to 12 serve as a transition from natural narcissism to a time when an understanding of other people and relationships become a central operation. These years, generally called *latency*, are

hallmarked predominantly by entry and completion of elementary school as well as a departure from home as one's central field of operation. Children during these ages potentially learn more about the world around them than at any other time in life as their level of knowledge doubles every year. Most of this knowledge has to do with the existence of other people and the larger world. The primary component of this knowledge is that other people have needs and wants, which means that the individual is no longer the primary occupant of the universe. This knowledge of the real existence and significance of other people brings about much joy and grief. It is joyful to learn that there are other people to play with, learn from, and love with. The latency child learns that he is not alone. But it is also sad that the individual needs to come to some understanding that he can't have all that he wants. This same child can rejoice at learning of the existence of a playmate but not like the sharing of toys and time. He might discover the excitement of the difference in appearance and language of his Chinese neighbors but soon thereafter be disappointed that he is unable to speak Chinese. The world becomes both enlarged and limited at seemingly every juncture.

The successful completion of latency brings the child into early adulthood, ideally prepared to relate to other people from a basis of appropriate attachment, appropriate separation, and further development of self and others. In our Western culture, we have added a notion of adolescence to what is, in fact, early adulthood, at least as we understand it in primitive cultures. Unfortunately, there is often an unnecessary exacerbation of natural childhood narcissism during adolescence because the adolescent has not adequately been attached, separated, and developed during his childhood years and is unequipped to begin adult relational activity.

A major cause of what we shall now call *adult narcissism*, perhaps the basis of evil in our conception, is inadequate attachment and detachment in childhood, which limits the individual's perception of himself in relationship to others. There is a strong tendency for parents who attach well to children to have difficulty detaching from them. These children, as a result, are indulged with too much freedom and insufficient limitation, leading to parental dissatisfaction and consequent shaming. There are also a number of parents who neglect their infants and children, which leads these children to never having a sense of security that evolves from normal attachment. Additionally, there is the unfortunate phenomenon of neglect followed by indulgence followed by shame. This unholy combination is certainly fertile ground for the development of adult narcissism, which we propose to be a mannerism of evil.

We, the authors, have the privilege of frequent contact with a naturally narcissistic individual in the form of our 5-year-old grandson. It has been a "grand" opportunity to see narcissism at work. Simply put, grandson Gavin is happy when he gets what he wants and profoundly unhappy when he doesn't. We can see now, perhaps better than we did when raising our daughters,

the necessity for attachment, limitation, and detachment. Although we may indeed be some of Gavin's favorite people, at least by his mother's report, we are persona non grata when Gavin doesn't get what he wants or when, for instance, we insist that his beans be eaten at the dinner table. We are absolutely hated in the bean moments. Interestingly, in these moments Gavin wants no connection with us and insists on complete detachment in his hatred. However, when we limit Gavin's verbal explosions at the dinner table and ask him to depart into the living room, he does so with profound terror associated with this other-imposed separation. It must seem to our little fellow in these moments that there is an irresolvable conflict in both his need and desire for simultaneous detachment and connection. He wants the separation from us that is caused by his refusing to eat his beans while simultaneously wanting the connection to us as loved ones. To us, however, we just want him to eat vegetables. In these significant moments of childhood, Gavin wants two things that are incompatible with each other: He wants his way, that is, separation (from the beans) and connection (with his grandparents). We might say he wants the bean counters but not the beans.

It is our contention that the evil that erupts from adult narcissism has its taproot in these formative and profound years, when both child and parents must negotiate these exchanges of connection and limitation (detachment). Simply put, some parents are not able to say "yes" to their children and encourage them in life, but many more parents are not able to say "no" and limit their children. This parental limitation is likely due to the parents' own inability to attach and detach, which is the result of indulgence and neglect in their own childhood. This lack of parental limitation keeps children in a pseudo-infantile state where they believe that they should have everything they want and also have constant connection when these two phenomena are not compatible. This basic element of adult narcissism shows itself in either grandiosity or dependency based on this early life experience. It is in these years that the psyche comes to believe it must either be connected and totally cared for, or be separated and feel permanently abandoned. Later infancy and early childhood give increasing opportunity to understand the difference between separation and abandonment. Furthermore, a young child begins to grasp the concept of delayed gratification as separate from abandonment. The resolution of adult narcissism is the re-creation of the childhood dilemma of wanting attachment and detachment simultaneously. This re-creation of the original loss of proper attachment and the subsequent losses of repeated failures in connection and detachment must become conscious and realistically grieved. To realistically grieve is for the individual to recognize the unavoidable imperfection of life (parents and the environment in which he was raised), and begin the therapeutic task of contending with real-life limitations of both others and himself. Adult narcissism can be resolved singularly through a profound grief that ideally would have occurred during

the natural narcissistic years in which the child grieves either the loss of his desire for something or the loss of connection.

SYMPTOMS OF ADULT NARCISSISM

The current *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 4th edition (DSM-IV), identifies a narcissistic personality disorder (NPD) as one of several personality disorders. Other such disorders include borderline personality disorder (BPD) and antisocial personality disorder (APD). DSM-IV identifies NPD as an individual displaying grandiosity, needing excessive admiration, having a sense of entitlement, being interpersonally exploitative, and lacking in empathy, among other secondary symptoms. A cursory review of DSM-IV definitions and descriptions of the various personality disorders will show, however, that there is a common thread of narcissism in them all. In fact, it is likely that most or all the disorders in the DSM-IV have a narcissistic element at their base. For instance, a case can be made for a strong narcissistic element in the diagnosis of depression, anxiety, addictions, obsessive-compulsiveness, psychosomatic illness, and possibly thought disorders.

Our experience of 70 collective years of clinical experience confirms that a strong element of narcissism exists in individuals displaying the symptoms of most, if not all, of the illnesses described in the DSM-IV. We contend that many of the features of NPD identified in the DSM-IV are also present in all psychiatric disorders, albeit often in subtle forms. There is, for instance, a strong narcissistic element in BPD, which is, in fact, much more common than NPD and encompasses the large plurality of humankind, at least in North American society. Certainly, the psychogenesis of BPD is an attachment disorder. What happens in the BPD childhood is a failure to attach to a mother figure and subsequent hunger for that attachment. This hunger ultimately leads to various symptoms and pathologies, including addictions of various sorts, depression, anxiety, and certainly interpersonal failures. In the adult form of BPD, there exists an individual who displays a subtle desperation for attachment even though such attachment is usually quite temporary. This attachment can be to a person, persons, property, an organization, an addictive substance and/or behaviors, or even excessive dreaming or excessive doing. What happens in such individuals is that they attach pathologically to one of the aforementioned elements but are unable to detach unless forced to do so, at which point they subsequently attach to another element. Borderlines never learn how to properly attach and detach, thus never getting what they ultimately need. The basic flaw in the makeup of the borderline individual is that he has not moved successfully away from childlike narcissism. They are, as a result, at least as narcissistic as individuals diagnosed as NPD.

We would challenge some of the typical symptoms identified in the DSM-IV about NPD, which asserts that narcissists are singularly self-inflating and unduly independent. We suggest that an individual can be narcissistic in undue dependence or undue independence. In other words, adult narcissism shows itself in inappropriate attachment or inappropriate detachment. The problem that exists in adult-form narcissism is an inadequate attachment, which can lead to either inadequate attachment or inadequate detachment.

It is important to note that there is a spectrum of narcissism that exists in all of humankind. Individuals, such as borderlines and those with other personality disorders, generally display deeper and more profound narcissistic traits than most other people. Other psychiatric conditions, however, always have a narcissistic element in them. Furthermore, adults without a clinically diagnosed condition may suffer to some degree or another from an element of narcissism. This narcissism in the general population shows itself in less dramatic and pathological ways, although it is still based in undue independence or undue dependency.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

There are several arenas of literature that we need to examine to do even minimal justice to the matter of narcissism. We want to examine literature related to human development, classical and contemporary psychoanalytic literature, and theological and philosophical literature, as these areas all contribute to a fuller understanding of the concept of narcissism.

Developmental Literature

Clearly, we are presenting a format of understanding narcissism that is developmental, namely, understanding this phenomenon as a result of inadequate or arrested development. The primary developmental theorists in the field of psychology are Maslow, Piaget, Erikson, and Adler. Although making valuable contributions to developmental psychology, these theorists do not examine the matter of narcissism with any depth, nor do they examine the intrapsychic mechanisms of infancy. Piaget viewed the early life of the infant as one of "sensory motor" behavior to the large extent, but he did not elaborate on how the young infant feels or perceives the world beyond some cursory observations and examination. Maslow's understanding of infancy is that it is a time of "physiological existence" and perhaps not particularly psychologically relevant. Erikson (1950) added somewhat to an understanding of the psychological functioning of the infant, describing this time of life as one of "trust or mistrust." Adler did good work on the matter of community (i.e., how an individual must relate to other people to be successful and happy

in life), but his work is largely in relation to adult functioning, with but little reference to early childhood or infancy.

Bowlby (1969, 1973, 1980) provided for us the first thorough examination beyond that of Freud of the developmental process in infants and young children. His work on attachment, separation, and loss has served as a basis for many more attachment theorists and researchers, perhaps best represented by Ainsworth and colleagues (1978). Bowlby's contention is that the infant needs a secure attachment to the mother figure to develop a sense of self, a lack of which contributes to lifelong and chronic insecurity and relationship difficulties. Ainsworth and colleagues developed a paradigm, somewhat abridged by several other authors, identifying secure attachment in infancy and ultimately in adulthood in comparison with two or more other forms of insecure attachment. These authors do not deal with the personality disorders and other narcissism-based phenomena and diagnoses, but provide fertile ground for an understanding of the centrality of attachment in infancy and ultimately in adult life.

Classic Psychoanalytic Theory

Classical understanding of narcissism is best represented by Fenichel (1945). Fenichel and other classical psychoanalysts referred to "primary" and "secondary" narcissism. Primary narcissism is, as indicated above, a condition where the infant does not distinguish himself from the world, nor from objects in the world, nor is there a distinction between his ego and feelings. Freud (1924) would suggest that the infant does not have a sense of ego until the resolution of the Oedipus complex, occurring about age 6. This classical understanding of infant psychology suggests that the infant is not capable of loving because he does not distinguish himself from objects. There is, however, what psychoanalysts call *infantile omnipotence.* This phenomenon is also called an *oceanic feeling of primary narcissism,* which simply means a state of calm based on a fluid connection the infant feels with the world.

A secondary feature of primary narcissism in psychoanalytic thought is a phenomenon that occurs in later infancy in which the infant projects his omnipotence to parents (parental figures). This projection occurs because within a few months of life, the infant comes to realize, albeit with primitive cognition, that he cannot have all that he wants immediately. Psychoanalytic thought suggests that the infant projects his omnipotence from himself to his parental figures. This projection suggests that if I am incapable of taking care of myself, someone else must be capable; otherwise, I will die. This conclusion creates the infantile illusion that the parental figure must be perfect. The infant's "love" consists singularly of taking; he acknowledges objects insofar as he needs them for his satisfaction. He does not have a capacity to give (although some analysts, e.g. Mahler, would suggest otherwise).

Klein added an interesting twist to this understanding of infantile primary narcissism as it relates to love. In her classical work (1975), Klein suggested that the feeling of envy is intrinsically entwined with gratitude and is the basis for mature love. Thus, when an individual envies something, she is actually appreciating it, albeit with a subsequent desire to have the object. In infancy the individual can only fuse with objects (people), at least during most of this time of primary narcissism, rather than truly love them.

Fenichel (1945) described secondary narcissism as the adult narcissism that we have described above. The essence of secondary narcissism is alternating between a feeling of personal omnipotence, on the one hand, and projected omnipotence to other people, on the other hand. In other words, secondary narcissism vacillates between believing that one can have everything she wants and believing that someone external to her can give her everything she wants (i.e., be perfect). Fenichel and others suggested that all forms of mental illness, including depression, addictions, and thought disorders, are flawed attempts by individuals to return to the "oceanic feeling" of primary narcissism. Further understanding of secondary narcissism has to do with self-esteem. The proposal is that secondary narcissism is a faulty or flawed self-esteem based on a flawed understanding of personal omnipotence. Alternatively, narcissism can take the form of equally flawed low self-esteem based on the belief that other people possess the omnipotence to give them what they want.

Contemporary Psychoanalytic Theory

As there are many additional classical psychoanalytic authors, there are even more contemporary theorists in this realm. Among the predominant figures are Kernberg (1975), who wrote about the condition he called *borderline personality organization*, which we should understand as borderline personality disorder (BPD), which we have noted to be narcissistic at its basis. Kernberg's understanding of this condition or diagnosis is that it is a regressive phenomenon in which the adult operates at the stage between early infancy and toddlerhood, a stage described above as one of alternating omnipotence and projected omnipotence. Symptoms of borderlines include anxiety, "polysymptomatic neurosis," sexual aberrations, some quasi-psychotic features, lack of impulse control, and addictions. Polysymptomatic neuroses include multiple phobias, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) symptoms, psychosomatic illnesses, and paranoid-like symptoms. Kernberg suggested that the underlying feature of BPDs is narcissism, namely, the regression to omnipotence and projected omnipotence. He further suggested that the treatment of borderlines encompasses profound elements of transference and countertransference, or what we might consider to be a patient loving the therapist and the therapist loving the patient. This "love" is perceived by Kernberg as

being an infantile or primitive experience of fusion between the omnipotent patient and omnipotent therapist.

A contemporary of Kernberg with a profound impact on psychoanalysis and psychology is Heinz Kohut. He followed much of classical psychoanalytic thought (1971) in suggesting that there is a normal infantile narcissistic state that ideally is negotiated carefully so that "narcissistic needs" are properly met. He saw the adult form of narcissism in personality disorders as a bridge between psychotic disorders and normal development. Normal development is hallmarked by positive self-esteem and self-confidence compared to the delusional grandiosity displayed in psychotic disorders. Narcissistic (personality) disorders have primarily two forms: an excessive need for attention, which is closer to normalcy, and depression and psychosomatic illness, which are closer to psychosis. Under optimal developmental conditions, the infant moves from a grandiose self through a grandiose (maternal) object to a place of understanding personal limits and limits of the maternal figure. Under the same optimal circumstances, the child experiences gradual disappointment in the maternal figure and simultaneously becomes more realistic in his expectations of her. The desired end product of this normal narcissistic stage is for the infant and young child to withdraw unrealistic expectations of the world around him, thus preparing him for the joys and sorrows of adult life.

Kohut (1971) discussed what he referred to a "narcissistic wound," which is the result of a failure of the maternal figure to provide an adequate balance of nurturance and limitation. This wound causes retention of the grandiose self or the "idealized parent or imago": "Narcissism, in my general outlook, is defined not by the target of the instinctual investment (i.e., whether it is the subject himself or other people) but by the nature or quality of the instinctual charge" (Kohut, 1971, p. 26).

If the child experiences traumatic disappointments in the admired adult, the idealized parent imago is retained in its unaltered form and not transformed into a realistic individual who has limits as well as personal desires. Kohut believed that this narcissistic wound occurs between the ages of 1 and 3, or what Freud has called the anal stage of development. Finally, he suggested that these narcissistic wounds lead to a "general structural weakness" in one's capacity to feel personally safe and to relate adequately to other people.

Lowen (1983) gave a welcome addition to contemporary psychoanalytic understanding of narcissism. He noted, for instance, that narcissism is an "exaggerated investment in one's image at the expense of the self," which suggests that narcissistic feelings, desires, and behaviors are antithetical to real self-esteem or what psychologists generally refer to as the "self." Furthermore, he suggested that contrary to their appearance, narcissists are not actually aware of their deepest feelings. Rather, they are inclined toward explosions of rage on the one hand, or strong declarations of "love" on the other. Lowen's

theme in understanding narcissism is that there is a degree of "unreality" in the individual, probably exacerbated by elements of narcissism in the culture.

Perhaps Lowen's best-known contribution to psychology is his belief that there is a physiological substrate to all aspects of emotional disturbances. Specifically, he suggested a paradigm of physical representation in the body of arrested psychological development. His belief is that the narcissist has a body structure that is "upward displaced." This body structure is typified by the masculine ideal of Western culture, namely, a muscular upper body out of proportion with the mid- and lower-body structure. Lowen's belief about body structure in relation to psychological development has to do with body "energy," work developed by Wilhelm Reich (1959). Lowen's suggestion is that the narcissist holds this energy "up" in his body, thus increasing his capacity to meet his wants, but decreasing his capacity to meet his emotional needs. In contrast to classical psychoanalytic thought, Lowen did not discuss or believe in primary narcissism. Rather, he believed that narcissism stems from a disturbance in the parent–child relationship where the child has been indulged or neglected. He does, however, agree with the classicists in their understanding that all people with personality disorders, including borderlines and others, have a basic element of narcissism. Lowen's contribution to an understanding of narcissism includes his body representation of the experience and his belief that "the more narcissistic one is, the less one is identified with one's feelings."

Theological Analogy of Narcissism as Separation From God

In this discussion, we wish to offer a cursory review of literature regarding matters that fall into the categories of theology, philosophy, and sociology. This will encompass examination of the theological concepts of God, sin, grace, forgiveness, and so on. Philosophical constructs include love, understanding, intellectual and emotional development, and interpersonal development. Societal constructs include individuals' impact on society and society's impact on individuals. It is obvious that we cannot do justice to any, let alone all, of these concepts in a few pages. Rather, let us briefly examine some literature, primarily from certain Christian writers, followed by a discussion of the matter of evil.

There is a paucity of adequate theological work in understanding narcissism. Extant literature includes Johnson (1980), Hood and associates (1990), Watson and associates (1990), and Torrance (1987). Johnson (1980) examined the correlation and similarity between narcissism and a biblical concept of sin. He found that the concept of sin in the scriptures is by no means universal but may be summarized in a Kierkegaardian definition, namely, that sin is the opposite of faith. Other definitions of sin include breaking of the law, alienation (Tillich), and immorality (Niebuhr). Johnson suggested that

there is a weak correlation between sin and narcissism in that sin, as faithlessness, would naturally lead to personal insecurity, which would lead to undo selfishness or selflessness (i.e., narcissism).

Hood and colleagues (1990) and Watson and colleagues (1990) examined "pathological narcissism" finding elements of undo independence and undo independency. They found that both of these conditions are antithetical to biblical Christianity. These authors have provided a fair amount of research into the narcissistic character, especially as it relates to various forms of religiosity. One of their findings is that individuals with an extrinsic religiosity are more narcissistic (Watson et al., 1990).

Torrance (1987) represented a Reformed examination of what is currently called a culture and time of narcissism. Torrance argued that Western culture has moved away from a Christian understanding of community to an undo focus on the individual. He collapsed contemporary psychology into what he called an "awareness movement," where the individual is taught to be self-assertive. Torrance followed Christopher Lasch's "Culture of Narcissism" in challenging this undo individualism and self-assertion. Torrance proposed that narcissism does not, in fact, develop a genuine self-esteem, but an artificial self-enhancement due to indulgence. He concluded by suggesting that koinonia (community) provides a true context of self-discovery that can free Christians from pride and isolation of self.

Our proposition is that when people are in a state of narcissism, they have separated from their (true) selves and are unable to contribute fully to their environment due to either their grandiose perceptions or their projected blame on the environment. As noted above, most classical and contemporary psychologists suggest that there is an inherent factor of narcissism in all personality disorders. We add to those suggestions that all personality disorders are the outgrowth of improper attachment. In considering the lack of proper attachment as the basis for narcissism, we look at how an individual who is in a state of poor attachment of self is unable to properly attach to society as a whole and consequently is unattached to the nature of goodness and maturity, that is, contributing to society in a meaningful and lasting way.

We suggest that a gross definition of evil is separation from God, or not being attached to God. We further suggest that "God" is a heavenly or universal maternal figure. If an individual fails to mature, he will subsequently fail to contribute to the environment and remain stagnated at a level of undo self-focus, or narcissism. In a broad sense, *development* implies maturation that should lead eventually to a more God-like persona. This lack of contribution is, in essence, a separation from God and consequently a separation from doing the work of God, or goodness. Noting that proper attachment leads to individualization, we suggest that maturity occurs when one maintains a cycle of attaching and detaching in conscious awareness of the necessity and value of both of these operations. The mature person becomes increasingly

aware of the value of any relationship as well as the need to detach from every relationship for a time. It is in this cycle that relationships are solidified. We suggest that this full cycle of personal development is true maturity, the antithesis of evil.

If people are immature—that is, narcissistic—they will then lack a basic sense of security from which they make contributions to the world. As noted above in the psychoanalytic understanding of narcissism, an individual will either project a false sense of personal grandiosity or project this grandiosity to the outer world and eventually thrust his infantile anger in the form of external blaming. Both of these projections are functionally dishonest. Theologically and scripturally, God is personified as truth. Therefore, the state of narcissism is a state of dishonesty, or ungodlike behavior. As the infant projects a necessary perfection on the maternal figure, the adult narcissist projects "necessary perfection" on the environment. The difference between the infant and the adult is that the infant has no choice but to believe her caretaker is perfect. The adult narcissistic maintains the infantile projection as a fantasy over the disappointing truths of limitation and imperfection instead of experiencing her true feelings of disappointment and sadness. Scripture instructs that there is freedom in truth. The therapeutic task for the narcissistic is to trust the truth of her feelings. Truth is what matures her, broadens her interpersonal views, and develops a more solid character base.

Narcissism can also be considered to be evil by recognizing that a narcissistic individual is functionally greedy, asking or demanding more from the environment than she needs or more than the environment can provide. An individual in this state of demand for care is unable to make contributions to the world. This neediness or greed is anti-good or unlike God—it is the antithesis of God. Again, the correlation is that adult narcissists insist that their world accommodate the infantile fantasy need for total care (i.e., dependency). This infantile dependency in adulthood can result only in greed at best, and paranoia at worst.

RESOLUTION OF NARCISSISM

We propose that the resolution of narcissism is grief. Further, we propose that grief, which we identify with uncomplicated sadness, is the central ingredient for success in relationships, success in life, and general maturity. We distinguish grief (or sadness) from depression, the former being a natural state of coping with the necessary losses of life, and the latter a clinical condition that is essentially narcissistic. This statement is a departure from the current understanding that depression is biogenic in origin and biological in its basic form. Thus, we agree with Fenichel and other classic psychoanalysts in the suggestion that depression is to some degree a choice, and to a larger degree a result of failing to grieve.

There is continual grief in the entirety of life beginning in infancy and continuing through adult life. Certainly, the neonate grieves the loss of a largely perfect uterine environment. The developing infant grieves the loss of nearly constant comfort and nurturance. The toddler grieves the limitations and loss of freedom to go where he wants and do what he wants to do. The preschool child grieves in his transition into the oedipal stage of life, and soon thereafter grieves the loss of oedipal feelings. The school-aged child grieves the loss of regular comfort and nurturance that are largely replaced by cognitive learning and social learning. Furthermore, the school-aged child (age 6–12) certainly has daily grief over mild or major failures in school, social disappointments, and loneliness. Adolescents have complicated grief because of the lack of freedom and responsibility that they have in Western society, and they experience artificial grief associated with trivial social disappointments. Grief continues through early adulthood in many forms, including academic failure or disappointment, failure in intimate relationships, and failures in entry and maintenance into the world of work. Adults have regular grief over the challenges presented in parenting young children and nurturing them into childhood and adolescence. There are no marriages or relationships that are without relatively regular grief as couples strive to understand themselves and relate to one another. As adults mature into later years, and often beforehand, they experience the loss of loved ones, loss of property, loss of ideas, and loss of ideals. Eventually they face the grief of the loss of their own health or lives.

The aforementioned statements of grief that occur over the life span could sound depressing and lead to despair. We would contend, however, that grief is neither despair nor depression, but rather a natural part of life, and something to be enhanced, experienced, and completed. We further propose that much of the distress of life is unnecessary and ultimately narcissistic because individuals and society fail to accept the necessity and ultimate value of sadness and grief. The central notion of this proposal is that grief ends, whereas despair and depression do not. Despair is the failure to accept the truth of life, and it is the maintenance of a childlike (narcissistic) view that "I should get and keep everything that I want." We can easily see that it is unwise for our children to have everything that they want, and can generally see that our acquaintances don't need everything that they want. It is much harder, however, to genuinely understand that it is not good for us to have what we want. This kind of understanding can come only with maturity, and maturity comes only by facing the routine and necessary nature of grief.

The root of narcissism is that I am perfect or you are perfect. In other words, I can have all I want by my own hand, or someone else can provide me all that I want. The primary narcissism of infancy creates and reinforces this view of life. But it takes at least another 12 years of childhood to transition out of this belief that I will continue to get everything I want. The

key difference between primary narcissism and the adult form of secondary narcissism is the distinction of wants and needs. Infants do not distinguish between wants and needs. A primary purpose of the extended childhood that humans have, as compared to all other animals, is to experience life and make this distinction. This distinction can be made only by grieving that I don't get all that I want.

True grief is short lived for the most part. Indeed, it may take a year or more to grieve the loss of a loved one, during which time a person recalls the months or years of joy with the person she has lost. But for all other losses of less magnitude, grief should last something between minutes and hours. In fact, the most important losses and subsequent griefs are those of short duration and trivial matters. I can't find a parking space close to the concert hall. I drop my fork on the floor. My newspaper rips when I open it up. My computer locks up on me. More significant losses and subsequent griefs include misunderstandings among friends, loss of employment, major loss of property, loss of investment, and the like. If we are mature and become true to ourselves and to life, and particularly true to the normal period of sadness, our grief will be short lived. Furthermore, and more importantly, we will come to realize that losses are not generally as significant as we hold them to be. Mature individuals realize that losses are necessary and generally good even though they are always sad and painful. Sadly, there is a convoluted condition that is related to the understanding of the value of loss, namely, masochism. Sadly, masochists seek pain as a way of enhancing loss, probably reflecting early childhood loss that has not been properly grieved.

There is a beauty to grieving and sadness that is often overlooked. Shakespeare used the term "sweet sorrow" to capture the essence of this concept. One cannot feel grief or sorrow without first loving something. The infant feels a loss as separation, but not particularly out of love except in a primitive form because an infant does not distinguish himself from his environment. Early forms of love in preschool years are largely those of attachment, need, and pleasure. The grief that we see in infancy and early childhood is complicated predominately by fear in infancy and predominantly by anger in early childhood. Genuine sadness, which is based on love, probably does not occur frequently until the child is beyond the oedipal stage, or at about the age of 6.

Ideally, the mature adult loves much. She loves people, property, and ideas with various forms of love. This same mature loving adult will then unavoidably experience frequent sorrow. The hallmark of a mature adult is to be able to face loss and grief honestly and profit from the loss, at least in most situations. We frequently tell our patients, "If you love much, you will grieve much." The mature or maturing adult becomes familiar and friendly with the experience of sorrow as it increasingly reminds her of the depth and breadth of her love. Furthermore, where there is loss, there is always some kind of

gain. The fall and winter of the year include the loss of billions of life forms, but then even more billions generate in the following spring. Likewise, in human life, where there is loss, there is always some kind of gain, usually more than the loss.

Narcissism in any form is an impediment to grief, which itself then impedes a greater love. Our proposition is that the resolution and possibly cure of narcissism are in the increased awareness of necessary grief: that our parents failed us, that not everyone likes us or approves of us, that choices have to be made, that we have to choose between eating our vegetables or leaving the dinner table, that we try our best but still fail in competition or relationships, that war happens, and that the polar ice cap melts. Our focus has been primarily on individual maturity through grief, but we might suggest that a group or society at large could profit from appropriate grief to cure narcissistic elements that exist within the group or society. Evil, as we conceive of it, is the maintenance of narcissism, to one degree or another, rather than the enhancement of love.

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